

c.—THERAPEUTICS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MIND.

MENTAL INFLUENCE.—At the April meeting of the New York Neurological Society, Dr. Geo. M. Beard, in the course of the discussion of the paper of Dr. Leroy Satterlee, upon "neuroses of the skin," said that he had been endeavoring to treat various nervous affections by the power of the mind alone. He is trying to reduce this method of treating diseases to a certain scientific basis, and just now is beginning to treat skin diseases in that manner.

For example, in the case of eczema, he takes a piece of metal and applies it over the diseased spot, and thus endeavors to make the patient believe that he is putting magnetism in him and influencing the disease by it. Then he asks him how long he can wait for the disease to be cured. "Two weeks?" "Yes." And in two weeks he will be cured. The practice, he states, has worked admirably with other diseases, and he thought good results would follow this method of procedure in some diseases of the skin, for it is a well-known fact that skin affections are frequently caused by mental influences. The same influence could be used in the course of the same affections. He mentioned a case reported in the newspapers shortly after the great Chicago fire, of a person having eczema being cured by the excitement of that occasion, yet statements of medical matters made through the daily papers should be taken with due allowance. He mentioned several cases which showed the influence of the mind upon diseases of the skin. He recollected the case of a gentleman living in a distant city where the influence of the mind was particularly well shown: He had an obstinate eczema of the scrotum. His position in business was a responsible one, and the disease seemed to rise and fall with the degree of anxiety in business. There seemed to be an intimate correlation between the two.

Regarding the treatment of skin diseases by electricity, he said that when electricity is applied locally, and relief or cure is obtained, it does not follow that the disease is reached through the nerves. It may be that the relief takes place through the chemical action of the current, or at least by its direct local effect on the tissues, just as happens in the treatment of ulcers. But when the applications were made centrally in the method of central galvanization, and no applications were made to the diseased surface, and relief followed, it was a strong fact in favor of the theory of the nervous origin of these diseases. This interesting fact was shown in the case of eczema and prurigo.

Then there are some temperaments which will not bear electricity. They may have skin disease. And if such diseases in such persons are treated by electricity they will not be cured. He had seen a patient, with Dr. Bulkley, suffering from herpes, followed by neuralgia, treated with electricity, with unsatisfactory result. The failure, however, was not with the disease, but with the patient—with his temperament. The same disease in other patients is relieved at once by the use of electricity. In a similar case in another patient, seen also with Dr. Bulkley, the treatment was successful. w.

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AMMONIA.—O. Funke and A. Deahna, *Pflueger's Arch. f. d. ges. Phys.*, IX., s. 416. In frogs the authors noticed, on administration of ammonia in any way whatsoever, the occurrence of tetanic convulsions, following the primary manifestations of pain, after a time proportionate to the concentration of the article. This spasm, which the authors consider reflex in its nature, is soon followed by utter prostration, accompanied, however, by a state of *exalted* reflex irritability, so that the slightest sensory impression, even loud shouting, is responded to, though feebly, by reflex movements. Still a repetition of the tetanus was never observed, probably from the great exhaustion. In other more severe cases, which pursue a fatal course, reflex irritability is entirely destroyed by the primary tetanus, while motor nerves and muscles still respond to a direct stimulus. Rabbits react in a similar manner on injection of the agent into the blood; the hypodermic method was found of much less effect in them.

The tetanus is of centric origin, as it implicates the posterior extremities even after their blood supply is cut off, while they escape the convulsions on section of the sciatic nerves. Division of the cord below the medulla does not affect the result. The reflex impulses are so powerful as to overcome even the paralysis induced by moderate doses of curare. In short, the agent appears to be identical in its action on the cord with strychnia.

The effects of ammonia on the circulation are a feeble reduction of the blood-pressure, followed in a short time by an enormous increase of the same, while from the beginning the frequency of the pulse is diminished. Both the latter and the primary diminution of pressure were found to be the result of a strong excitation of the vagus of centric origin, though it could not be determined whether this was due to stimulation of that centre, or merely increase of its reflex irritability. The secondary augmentation of tension is caused by powerful contraction of the systemic arterioles, from excitation mainly of the vaso-motor centre in the medulla, though it was not proven conclusively that the stimulation was limited to this centre alone. The dyspnoea produced by the agent is indicated by a primary acceleration of respiration, which, at first shallow, hereupon becomes deeper. Larger doses produce a subsequent *arrest* for two to three seconds, which is sometimes the only respiratory alteration. If now tetanus occurs, respiration is more or less arrested during the entire period. Hereupon an augmentation, both in frequency and depth of respiration, follows, all of which phenomena are rendered more prominent by section of the vagi. This latter fact would therefore prove that the arrest of respiration is not due merely to an irritation of the peripheral end of the vagus by the agent, which Knoll had previously shown to occur.

H. G.

NITRITE OF AMYL.—W. Filehne, *Pflueger's Arch. f. d. ges. Phys.*, IX., s. 470. In order to avoid the fright of the animals (rabbits), as well as any impression of the vapor on the trigeminus-terminations in the nasal mucous membrane, inducing reflex phenomena, the author caused the animals to inhale through a canula in the divided trachea. The question whether the dilatation of vessels caused by nitrite of amyl is due to an influence of the